

The Saint at Rest.

144-
BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
SERMON,
OCCASIONED BY THE
DEATH
OF

MRS. MARY LANE;

Who departed this Life *October 14, 1773,*
In the Fifty-seventh Year of her Age.

By T. GROVE.

There the wicked cease from troubling: and there the
weary be at rest. *JOB iii. 17.*

Be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith
and patience inherit the promises. *HEB. vi. 12.*

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THE
SUBJECT
OF A
MEMORANDUM
OCCASIONED BY THE

D E A T H

Mrs. MARY J. LANE



RECEIVED

There are several other examples and there are
many more to be found in the
The first of these is the "The Great
The second is the "The Great
The third is the "The Great

CONFIDENTIAL

RE V. xiv. 13.

I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.

DEATH, Judgment, and Eternity, tho' to the young, the gay, and the vain, the most unpleasing, yet are they the most awful and important subjects that can engage the heart of a minister, or the attention of his hearers. Subjects in which every individual is equally interested, and in the practical improvement of which the greatest wisdom is discovered. *It is appointed unto men once to die*. Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return†. This irreverfible decree of heaven, is an awful*

* Heb. ix. 27.

† Gen. iii. 19.

and alarming voice, to rouse the mind of the sordid, to check the ambition of the vain, and stem the torrent of those, who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. *Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever*?* They are all numbered among the dead, and the places which once knew them, shall know them again no more for ever. Death, relentless death, is daily making inroads into the habitations of men. He pays no regard to age, or sex, or state, or time, or place. His darts seem hurled at random, but each receives its commission from the sovereign disposer of all events; which it punctually observes, and fully executes. The effects of which, we have lately felt in the removal of a dear sister. Her sun is now gone down, but thanks be to God, it did not set in a cloud. There was *hope in her death*. With undaunted intrepidity of soul she could say, *to die is gain*. How is this to be accounted for? Was she not of like *passions* with us? She was a daughter of our common parent. *By nature a child of wrath, even as others†*. But she could see *the sting of death, which is sin*,

* Zech. i. 5.

† Eph. ii. 3.

taken away by the *sinner's friend*; who extracted this poison from her wounded soul, at the expence of his own life. By divine grace, she was enabled to act faith upon him, *on whom whosoever believeth, hath everlasting life* *. “ Thus faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death.” Tho’ formerly a self-confident pharisee, trusting in her *own righteousness*, she was afterwards taught to renounce it all as *filthy rags*, and anxiously desire *to be found in Christ, not having her own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God apprehended by faith* †. Being thus found in him, she departed this life in peace, and is now numbered among the blessed dead which die in the Lord, who shall for ever rest from their labours.

With an earnest desire that the death of our sister may prove the means of life to your souls, I have fixed upon these words for the subject of your present meditation. May that Jesus, who liveth and was dead, who commanded St. John to write them, and that ever-blessed Spirit, who still bears witness to the truths contained in them, now open and apply them to each of our hearts.

John iii. 36. Phil. iii. 9.

I heard

I heard a voice from heaven, &c.

From these words I shall endeavour to shew,

I. Who are happy in and after death.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

II. Wherein their happiness consists.

From henceforth they rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And then produce,

III. The concurring testimony of three faithful witnesses, for the establishing of this truth.

I. Who are happy in and after death.

Here we are not left to uncertain conjectures, and vain speculations. Our text very satisfactorily, tho' very concisely, determines the matter. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* Since only those who die in the Lord, are blessed, it greatly behoves each of us to consider what we are to understand by being in the Lord; and then whether we in particular are thus in him. Are your hearts making the enquiry,

ry, Sirs? Are you all anxiety, lest you should deceive yourselves in a matter of such vast importance? For be assured, *this is not a vain thing, it is your life* *. If so, I shall gladly proceed to the prosecution of this subject, entreating you to hear as candidates for eternity. *Take heed, therefore, how ye hear* †. The blessed dead spoken of in our text, are such as are *in the Lord*, in a more extensive sense than modern professors will admit. If a person be born in a christian land, and baptized into the name of Christ; if he frequent the house of God on the Sabbath, and occasionally go to the table of the Lord; if he pay every one his own, and out of his abundance gives something to the poor; tho' he sometimes take a cup too much with his friend, or is now and then seen at the playhouse, or card-table, he is by many esteemed a very good christian; and if his good works don't procure him a lofty seat in glory, woe be to thousands. Though many thus live tolerably without Christ, die comfortably without him they cannot; for *blessed only are the dead which die in the Lord*.

* Deut. xxxii. 47. † Luke viii. 18.

Nor are we here to confine our views to God's purposes of love to sinners, in choosing them in Christ Jesus: which, tho' it be a comforting truth, and full of godly consolation, proves so only to those, who have in themselves the witness of God's Spirit, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption*. Therefore the apostle exhorts every believer, to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure†. Before any of Adam's race can die in peace, it is then absolutely necessary to be brought into a state of vital union with Christ: in which sense, I apprehend, we are to understand the words of our text: *For whom the Lord predestinated, them he also called‡. They are taken out of the stock, that is wild by nature, and engrafted into Christ the good olive tree; whereby they partake of the sap and fatness of the root§. Though they are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, they are quickened by the mighty power and life giving Spirit of Christ||. For God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with*

* Eph. iv. 30. † 2 Pet. i. 10. ‡ Rom. viii. 30.

§ Rom. xi. 24. || Eph. ii. 1.

Christ;

Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus *. The excellency of the christian mystery, is Christ in you the hope of glory †. The kingdom of God is within you ‡. Without this, there is no real religion; for Christ is the first and the last, the all, and in all §. Those who are truly blessed then, are such as are found in Christ, as their city of refuge ¶; as their covert from the storm ¶; as their justifying righteousness, and complete redemption **. Such are said to have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith ††. And whosoever, from heart-felt experience, shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God ‡‡.

This is a vital union; so that the life which such live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of God §§. Their life is hid with Christ in God ¶¶. Christ is the life of their souls ¶¶; and by faith in, and dependence upon him, they are daily receiving, out of his fulness, grace for

* Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6. † Col. i. 27. ‡ Luke xvii. 21.
§ Gal. iii. 21. ¶ Psalm xvi. 1. ¶ Isa. xxxii. 2.
¶ 1 Cor. i. 30. †† Eph. iii. 17. ‡‡ John iv. 15.
§§ Gal. ii. 20. ¶¶ Col. iii. 3. ¶¶ John v. 24.

grace . For as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me, saith Christ† . Those also, who truly believe in him, with the heart unto righteousness, or, in other words, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, will be careful to maintain good works. As they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so they will walk in him ‡ .*

*This is also implied in our text, by being in the Lord. It is not sufficient to be in Christ, by a profession for a season; for it is he that endureth to the end, that shall be saved§ . Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life || . Many seem to follow Christ gladly for a while, and then draw back; but says the apostle, We are not of those, who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul¶ . Such persons evidence their faith to be of the operation of God's Spirit, by a life of devoted obedience. He that hath this hope, purifieth himself as God is pure**, As he that calleth them is holy, so are they holy in all manner of conversation†† . Thus*

** John i. 16. † John xv. 4. ‡ Col. iii. 6. § Matth. x. 22. || Rev. ii. 7. ¶ Heb. x. 39. ** 1 John iii. 2. †† 1 Pet. i. 15.*

they live, and thus they die. For *blessed are the dead which die in the faith, the favour, and fear of the Lord.* These regenerate, heaven-born souls, having their lamps burning, and lights shining, go forth with joy to meet the bridegroom : for this union is also indissoluble, as well as vital. *Neither death, nor life, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**. He that has been their guide, comforter, and support through life, will not forsake them in the important article of death, *for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee†*. The religion of Jesus is a reality. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation ‡*. Tho' before he can ascend the hill of the Lord §, he is constrained to pass thro' the valley of the shadow of death; yet Christ has turned that which was a curse, into a blessing. Death is now numbered among that vast cluster of blessings to which believers are entitled thro' Christ. The serpent has lost his sting. Death is disarmed of his terror, and is to the real christian a messenger of

* Rom. viii. 38. † Heb. xiii. 5. ‡ John i. 24.

§ Psal. xiv. 3.

peace: so that *the day of his death, is better than the day of his birth* *. Although in this life he has showers of blessings daily poured into his soul by his indulgent Father (to enlarge upon which would be to depart from my present subject), yet in death he is peculiarly distinguished. Then he enters into peace durable, and *eternal in the heavens*. Then he takes possession of that *rest which remaineth for the people of God* †. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*. Now the important question is, *Are ye in the Lord?*

II. We are to consider wherein their happiness consists. *From henceforth they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*. A sight of Christ makes death not only welcome, but desirable. *It is Christ to live, but to die is everlasting gain* ‡. Believers are happy in death, for the bonds thereof are broken asunder. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* §. With the patriarch of old, the believer cries out, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord* ||: and with the

* Eccl. vii. 1. † Heb. iv. 9. ‡ Phil. i. 21. § Psal. cxvi. 15. || Gen. xlix. 18.

psalmist, *Then I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness**. Blessed exchange! The body is now sown in dishonour, then it shall be raised in glory. To these happy souls, who are in *Christ Jesus*, there is now no condemnation†. *What then shall they fear? or of whom shall they be afraid‡?* The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but God hath given them the victory through *Jesus Christ*§. Though flesh and heart now fail, the Lord is the strength of their heart; and their portion for ever||. His rod and staff support and comfort them in the dreary passage¶. Death draws aside the veil which so long concealed the precious Jesus from their eyes. The beauty, the unsullied, matchless beauty, which the believer could behold in Jesus, even through a glass darkly, has now made him long, yea earnestly long, to see him face to face. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee***, has long been the language of his soul. The streams were sweet, but now the soul must drink at the fountain. Now the wished for pe-

* Psal. xvii. 15. † Rom. viii. 1. ‡ Psal. xxvii. 1.
 § 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. || Psal. lxxiii. 26. ¶ Psa. xxiii. 4.
 ** Psal. lxxiii. 25.

riod is come. Happy day ! Blessed messenger ! I have often started at the thought of thy approach, said our departed sister, and was afraid to meet thee. But now I gladly embrace thee. I thought that thou hadst been mine enemy ; and, through fear of thee, I have all my life-time been subject to bondage. Now I find my mistake.

“ Why was unbelieving I,

“ Trembling, so afraid to die ?”

This blessed change took place about four days before her dissolution. She had many clouds, and much darkness, in general, upon her mind before. The Lord's work was gradual upon her soul ; and as she had more clear discoveries of the vileness of her own heart, so in proportion her fears increased. Sometimes, indeed, the sun shone through the clouds, and yielded her some gleam of home, which supported her soul : but these were transient visits. She was often writing bitter things against herself, and was ready frequently to give up all for lost. Yet the Lord was beyond all her fears ; for though in her day the *light was neither clear nor dark*, yet, according to his gracious promise (which was often a reviving cordial to her soul) *at evening-*

evening-time it was light *. She could say to those around her, when in racking pain of body, blessed be God for this affliction; it has proved a refining furnace to my soul. And though she was confined from the house of God (the attendance upon which was her soul's delight) for a very long season †, yet she was never left to murmur against him, who laid his afflicting rod upon her. She was sometimes comforted with thinking, *if the Lord had been pleased to have killed me, he would not have shewn me all these things* ‡. Still she could not venture into *Jordan* without having sight of the ark. The Lord at last gave her the desire of her heart; and, for the glory of his own great name, and support of his people's faith, enabled her to leave a blessed testimony behind her: so that she could say, I find I am now going; but I am going home to Jesus. *I know that my Redeemer liveth* §. I long to be dissolved. *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*. Frequently she would say, *Come hither, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath*

* Zech. xiv. 7.

† She was in a decline for near two years, in which time she was often visited with violent fits of the Stone, and an inward Fever.

‡ Judges xiii. 23. § Job xix. 25.

done

done for my soul *. The night before she died, with heaven in her eye, and Christ in her heart, in rapture of soul, she sung,

"Jesu! thy blood and righteousness,
 "My beauty are, my glorious dress;
 "'Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,
 "With joy shall I lift up my head," &c.

Although sleep now departed from her eyes, and her pains grew more violent, yet her soul was kept calm and serene. No doubts or fears disturbed her peace at that critical juncture; but she fell asleep in Jesus. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.*

As they are blessed in, so are they blessed after death. *From henceforth they rest from their labours.* Life, though but a span long, is full of trouble. Time, though but a parenthesis taken out of eternity, flows on in continual lines of sorrow. *Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not* †. "In the very midst of life we are in death."

* Psa. lxvi. 16. † Job xiv. 1, 2.

And if any arrive to four-score years, their strength then is but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and they are gone *. But from henceforth they bid an eternal adieu to all the labour, toil, and pain; to all troubles, sorrows, sufferings, and calamities of this present evil world. Many are the afflictions of the righteous here; without are fightings, within are fears; but at death, the Lord delivereth him out of them all †. A tempting devil, an ensnaring world, and a deceitful heart, cause the righteous to mourn in this vale of tears; but from henceforth they shall rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ‡. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes §. The Canaanites who are still in the land, the remains of indwelling corruptions, make head against them here, and frequently oppress them sore; but death gives complete and eternal victory over them all. From henceforth the old dragon, and all his attendants, are driven from the palace they had long usurped, and the soul, being made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, with acclamations of praise is ushered into the joy of its Lord. Released from the

* Psal. xc. 10. † Psal. cxlv. 19. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 8.

§ Rev. viii. 17.

cage, it mounts upwards swifter than any of the winged tribe, to join in chorus with the innumerable host, which surround *the throne of God and the Lamb*. The transition is made in the twinkling of an eye. The royal mandate, *Come up hither*, is instantaneously obeyed, and the soul is safely lodged in *Abraham's bosom*. *The inhabitants of this new Jerusalem shall no more say, I am sick* *. There he shall have joy without sorrow, pleasure without pain, health without sickness, light without darkness, and life without death. *In the Lord's presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore* †. Each believer is made a pillar in the temple of God, and shall go no more out ‡. He shall join the general assembly, and church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect §, in ascribing glory and honour, thanksgiving and praise, to God and the Lamb, without sinning and without ceasing. *These are they which are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb* ||: each one seated on a throne of glory, shall shine as the stars in the firmament for ever and ever.

* Isa. xxxiii. 24. † Psal. xvi. 11. ‡ Rev. iii. 12.
§ Heb. xii. 23. || Rev. vii. 14.

From henceforth they rest from their labours; —

So also, *their works do follow them.* Mark the expression. They don't go before to procure them an admission into the kingdom of heaven; but they follow after, and evidence that they have found favour in the sight of God, and are *accepted in the Beloved.* (For he has first respect to *Abel*, and then to his offering*.) When a person is thus accepted, his works, which spring from faith, are also rendered acceptable; yea, well-pleasing to God. *For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name †.* Jesus saith also: *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ‡.* These works are not the cause, but the effect of faith; for *without faith it is impossible to please God §.* *The very plowing of the wicked is sin ||; and the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord ¶.* The works of the saints follow them, for *even a cup of cold water, given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, i. e. which springs*

* Gen. iv. 4. † Heb. vi. 10. ‡ John xv. 8. § Heb. xi. 6. || Prov. xxi. 4. ¶ Prov. xv. 8.

from a right motive, and is directed to a right end, *shall not lose its reward**. But then it is *a reward reckoned not of debt, but of grace*†. These works shall be produced in the great decisive day, when the once despised Jesus shall erect his dread tribunal in the air, and summon quick and dead to appear before him. The spirits of the blessed, which have long been lodged in *Abraham's bosom*, shall then be re-united to their respective bodies, which, in the resurrection morn, shall be raised incorruptible: and the spirits of the accursed, which have long been confined in the doleful caverns of hell, shall again take possession of their bodies, raised immortal, to be capable of suffering the vengeance of an angry God. *Then all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ*‡; and every man be rewarded according to his works§: Then shall the saints labours of love be produced as fruits, to evidence and prove before that assembled throng, that their faith was genuine, and of a gospel kind; who, instead of expecting heaven as the reward of their obedience, when they hear mention made of any works of righteousness wrought

* Matt. x. 42.

† Rom. iv. 4.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 10.

§ Matt. xvi. 27.

by them, with a becoming modesty and holy blushing, will say, *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? naked, and clothed thee? &c.* * But the condescending Judge will reply, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me †: Enter into the joy of your Lord ‡. Then shall the righteous go away into life eternal §.*

This passage rases the very foundation of the self-righteous pharisee's hope; who, by his pretended sanctity and sincere obedience, expects to purchase an entrance into the new Jerusalem. Salvation is wholly of grace. Jesus is the sole procuring cause thereof. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved ||.* And when Jesus is received, as all our salvation, and all our desire; when his kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy, is established in the heart, a life of devoted obedience will certainly follow. *It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation ¶.* *If ye love me, saith the blessed*

* Matt. xxv. 37. † Ver. 40. ‡ Ver. 21. § Ver. 46.

|| Acts iv. 12. ¶ Rom. x. 10.

Jesus, *keep my commandments* * . The love of Christ will constrain all who possess it, *to obey from the heart* † . “ ’Tis love that “ makes our chearful feet, in swift obedience “ once move.” Yet, after all, they will say, *we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do* ‡ . Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory § , is the language of every humble soul, whilst here below. And when they are, by the matchless grace, and superlative love of Jesus, exalted to his own right hand, as trophies of his victory over sin and satan, they will cry : *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us* || . All heaven shall then echo with the sound of, *Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen* ¶ . Then shall the head-stone be brought forth with shoutings, *Grace, grace unto it* ** . And a blisful eternity shall be spent in singing, Amen, Hallelujah, Praise the Lord. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, &c.*

* John xiv. 15. † 2 Cor. v. 14. ‡ Luke xvii. 10. § Psal. cxv. 1. || Titus iii. 5. ¶ Rev. i. 5, 6. ** Zec. iv. 7.

Now,

Now, perhaps, some are ready to say, this is certainly a happy state, if what you have advanced may be depended on; but there are many who question the truth of it: This brings me,

III. In the third place, to produce the concurring testimony of three indubitable Witnesses, for the establishing of the truth contained in our text *.

The first, in order, is *St. John*, the penman of these words. *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write.* Thus holy men of God spake and wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost †; for saith the apostle, *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day ‡*. He did not impose upon the church the traditions of the elders, to bring in damnable heresies; nor did he teach for doctrines the commandments of men §, but bears record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw ||. And, as a noble champion for

* Although the Father, who is frequently mentioned in this book, might with propriety be introduced as a witness; yet, as I would here confine myself to the text in particular, I shall only produce the testimony of those contained therein.

† 2 Pet. i. 21.

‡ Rev. i. 10.

§ Matt. xv. 9.

|| Rev. i. 2,

the

the truth, he bids defiance to every gain-sayer, and boldly stands forth, and asserts, before God, angels, and men, *I John saw these things, and heard them* *. Since this, as well as *all other scripture, was given by inspiration of God, and is therefore profitable unto man* †. He does not seal up, but, as the Lord directed, publishes abroad the interesting and glorious prophecy of this book. *Blessed are they who keep the sayings thereof* ‡. Great is the truth, and will prevail.

The second witness, is the Lord from heaven, who commanded St. John to write, and is called, *the faithful witness* §. *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write.* Now he that here commissioned the beloved disciple to write, is the very same person who spoke to him ||, when he says, *I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia.—And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto*

* Rev. xxii. 8. † 2 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ Rev. xxii. 7.

§ Rev. i. 5. || Rev. i. 10.

the son of man. And in the following verses he gives such a wonderful description of the person he saw, as can answer to none but the Son of God. This truth is confirmed by the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy. *I Jesus, who am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches*.* *These things are faithful and true†.* It is at the peril of thy soul, O man, that thou callest in question any longer the authority of this word. Yet as the Lord well knew, that there would be atheistical scoffers in the last day, who would not only dispute the truth of his word, but even daringly take away from the contents thereof, and wilfully persist in sin thro' his forbearance; he publishes their doom before-hand, and threatens them with the severest of curses, which are written as with a pen of iron, or the point of a diamond. *I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from*

* Rev. xxii. 16. † Verse 6.

the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*
Awful threatening! Terrible curse! Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish†.

The third infallible witness, is God the Holy Ghost, the glorifier of Jesus, *who takes of the things which are his, and shews them to us‡.* Yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.* It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth§.

The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us||. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit¶. He magnifies his office in the œconomy of the covenant, by convincing the sinner of the divine authority and sacred import of the written word, which is a ground of faith; and directing him to look unto Jesus the essential Word, who is the principal object of faith, that so the sinner may be abased, and God glorified. This is the Spirit of Truth, who *abideth for ever***, and cannot bear witness to a lie.

* Rev. xxii. 18. † Acts xiii. 41. ‡ John xvi. 14. § 1 John v. 6. || Heb. x. 15. ¶ Rom. viii. 16. ** John xiv. 16.

His power shall be felt, in quickening and comforting the soul by the word of Jehovah, 'till the last *chosen vessel* shall stand complete before the God of gods in Zion. Then shall faith be turned into sight, hope be lost in fruition, and mortality be swallowed up of life. Happy day ! when grace shall be consummated in glory ! Out of the mouth of three such faithful *witnesses*, may God establish every word in your hearts. *Be ye no longer faithless, but believing* *.

Men, brethren, and fathers, are these things so † ? Is the force of the evidence, already summed up, irresistible ? Does conscience bear witness for God in your hearts, and say, verily this is true ? What remains then, but that, by the assistance of God, I should improve this solemn event, and what has been already said upon it, by a close and practical application. That God who spake to Job out of the whirlwind ‡, speaks by all his dispensations to the sons of men. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men* §. This alarming providence is a voice from God in particu-

* John xx. 27.

† Acts vii. 2.

‡ Job xxxviii. 1.

§ Prov. viii. 4.

lar, to each of us who assemble here. It calls upon me to be vigilant and diligent. *To work while it is day* *. *To be instant in season, and out of season* †. *To take heed unto myself, and unto my doctrine, and continue in them, that so I may both save myself, and them that hear me* ‡. It calls upon you, who have joined with her, (whose place here shall know her no more) in the same public ordinances, and who were with her united in the bonds of christian fellowship, to *gird up the loins of your mind, to be sober, and hope to the end* §: to *watch and pray, continually expecting the Bridegroom's coming* ||. In a word, this providence calls upon all, who may now hear of it, to *prepare to meet their God* ¶. Time flies, death approaches. You are all upon the very verge of eternity. Has not the king of terrors taken large strides towards many of you? Has he not once and again knocked at the door of your habitation, to remind you of your certain dissolution. Has he not placed himself in dread array before you, and terrified you with his ghastly appearance? Have not your earthly taber-

* John ix. 4. † 2 Tim. iv. 2. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.
§ 1 Pet. i. 13. || Mat. xxiv. 42. ¶ Amos iv. 22.

nacles sustained several shocks by sickness? What are all these pains you still daily feel, but so many memento's, calling upon you to consider your latter end? God only knows how soon the fabrick shall be wholly taken down, and moulder into dust. As soon as we draw our vital breath, we begin to die. To die! what is it? Surely there must be something very dreadful in death, since the generality put the time far from them as an evil day. Truly it makes nature shudder, when a door is opened for the spirit's entrance into a vast, unknown eternity.—It is the effect of sin. *In the day thou eatest of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt surely die*, saith Jehovah to our first parent *. So the event proved: Adam transgressed the divine command, and eat of the forbidden fruit †. By this act of rebellion against his Maker, he immediately brought spiritual death upon his soul, which entailed upon himself, and all his posterity, temporal death for the body, and eternal death both for body and soul. *In Adam all died ‡*. *By the offence of one, judgment came*

* Gen. ii. 17. † Gen. iii. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

*upon all men to condemnation *.* By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned †. The soul that sinneth, it shall die ‡. 'Tis sin, then, which makes death terrible, yea intolerable. O sin, sin, what hast thou done! How are the mighty fallen §! How is the gold become dim ||! How is the noblest part of the divine workmanship defaced by sin! It has slain its thousands, and tens of thousands! It will certainly slay, yea everlastingly destroy thee, whosoever thou art, who art led captive by it. For the wages of sin is death ¶. Tho' hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished **. The wicked shall be turned into bell, and all the nations that forget God ††. But I am aware that one part of my auditory have an excuse at hand. Methinks I hear you say, this subject is too gloomy for us at present; it will be highly necessary some years hence, when old age overtakes us, to think about religion and prepare for death; but at present, we have other concerns which must be attended to. We will go into such a city, and continue there a year,

* Rom. v. 18.

† Rom. v. 12.

‡ Ezek. xviii. 4.

§ 2 Sam. i. 19.

|| Lam. iv. 1.

¶ Rom. vi. 23.

** Prov. xi. 21.

†† Psal. ix. 17.

and

*and buy and sell, and get gain**; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant†. My young brethren, boast not of to-morrow, for you knew not what a day may bring forth‡. To-morrow! and time with you may be no more. To-morrow! and you may be a ghastly corpse. Come then, ye timorous, fearful souls, who turn pale at the sight of a coffin or a grave, yet give the reins to your lusts, and daringly persist in sin, in defiance of *Jeboab, your judge and law-giver*§. Come, take a turn with death. Behold him speedily riding upon a pale horse, to meet you in your mad career. Perhaps he has received his commission, and with a warrant, signed and sealed by the *King of kings*, is now about to apprehend the most active, robust, and healthy in this assembly. Striking thought! The passing bell, which so lately tolled for our departed sister, may next be heard for you. The feet of those, who lately carried her remains to the silent grave, the house appointed for all living, may carry you thither next. Are you ready? Can you welcome death? Alas, you cannot! Conscience tells you, you are not meet for

* James iv. 13. † Isa. lvi. 12. ‡ Prov. xxvii. 1.

§ Isa. xxxiii. 22.

heaven,

heaven, consequently, not prepared to die. Strange stupidity! Has not the Lord said, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live* * ? Yet you can, in the imagination of your hearts, add drunkenness to thirst: although the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against such, and all the curses that are written in this book, shall lie upon them; and the Lord shall blot out their names from under heaven †. Perhaps, in the very next act of lewdness, God may exchange the fire of your lust for the fire of hell. Perhaps, in the next drunken fit, some untimely death, as a judgment from the Almighty, may convey your soul to that flame, where you shall be for ever denied *a drop of water to cool your tongue* ‡. Perhaps, the Lord may say, Amen, to the very next oath, and give you to know what that damnation means, which you have so often called for upon yourselves and others. What an exchange will then take place! How will the soul be surprised to find itself shut up in the blackness of darkness for ever! Good God! what horrible dread will then overwhelm it! *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and*

* Isa. xxxviii. 1. † Deut. xxix. 19, 20. ‡ Luke xvi. 24.

there be none to deliver . Who, among you, can dwell with the devouring fire? Who, among you, can dwell with everlasting burnings† . Dream not of long life : there may be but a step between you and death‡ . You are not too young to die ; therefore not too young to seek the Lord. Jofiah began to seek after the God of David his father, while he was young§ . Samuel worshipped the Lord early|| . And Timothy was acquainted with the scriptures, from a child¶ . Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth** .*

“ Youth is the time to serve the Lord,

“ The time t’insure the great reward.”

Many of your companions and accomplices in wickedness, have been called to judgment before they arrived at your years ; how will you be able to meet them shortly at the bar ? Do they not lay the cause of their damnation in a great measure upon you ? Were not you the means of leading into those sinful practices which shut them up in hell ? Are they not now cursing their folly for hearkening to your

* Psalm i. 22. † Isa. xxxiii. 14. ‡ 1 Sam. xx. 3.
§ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. || 1 Sam. i. 28. ¶ 1 Sam. iii. 15.
** Eccles. xii. 1.

counsel ?

counsel? How will you endure the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, arise ye dead, and come to judgment? Will you not then, in wild confusion, cry *to the rocks and mountains to fall upon you, to hide you from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb**. But then it will be all in vain; for,

“ The seas shall cast the monsters forth to meet their doom,

“ And rocks but treasure up for wrath to come.”

May the Lord enable you to call upon him by fervent prayer, now he is seated upon a throne of mercy; that so when he is seated in judgment, you may stand before him with boldness, among those who have died in the Lord.

But give me leave to address myself to you who are old, and gray-headed. Surely death cannot be an unsuitable subject to you, who have one foot already in the grave. You are just entering the world of spirits. A few more days, or months at farthest, and your glass will be run out. Are you in the Lord? Are you ripe for heaven?

* Rev. vi. 17.

Are

Are you, with old Simeon, crying out, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation**? Would to God this was the language of all your hearts! But alas! are not the greater part of you swallowed up with the love of the world, and lost in total forgetfulness of God. You are anxious how you shall settle your worldly concerns, but indifferent about your souls, and the important realities of an eternal state. *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity*†? How long will ye resolve to enlarge your borders, to pull down your barns, and build greater; when ye know not but the Lord may blast all your flattering expectations with, *thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee*‡? Will nothing rouse you from carnal security? *If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many*§. *Yea, the sinner die an hundred years old, yet shall he be accursed*||. Can you trifle here? Is it a matter of indifference, whether you are happy, or miserable? Is it a matter of indifference, whether you are saved, or

* Luke ii. 29, 30. † Prov. i. 22. ‡ Luke xii. 18.

§ Eccl. xi. 8. || Isa. lxx. 20.

damned? Is it a matter of indifference, whether you dwell for ever with God, angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, in the realms of bliss and glory; or with devils, and damned ghosts, in the dark regions of horror and black despair? It is high time to awake out of the sleep of sin. My very heart pities you. Your situation is truly deplorable. Gladly could I spend and be spent for you. What arguments can I make use of to affect your hearts? If you could but look beyond the gulph you are just entering, and see how infernal fiends wait for you, how hell opens its voracious jaws, desirous of swallowing you up, like Belshazzar, *your countenance would be changed, and your thoughts trouble you, so that the joints of your loins would be loosed, and your knees smite one against another* *. May God disappoint your enemies, by plucking you as brands from the burning. No human arguments will prevail:—they cannot reach the heart. O Jesus, preach thyself! Speak to their dead souls, and they shall come forth! How happy, how glorious a deliverance would this be for you. Then would you be able to meet death with joy;

* Dan. v. 6.

for,

for, *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.*

Are there not others, in this assembly, who are thinking all is well, and that they are in a safe state, whose *hope* is nevertheless but *as the spider's web* *, which shall ere long be swept away by the besom of destruction †. This is that generation, who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness ‡. Ye that are trusting in yourselves, that ye are righteous, and despise others §, attend to the words of our text: *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* Not, *blessed* are they who confide in a profession of religion, as their passport to heaven; who pay *tithes of mint, annise, and cummin*, and neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone ||. *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness ¶.*

“ No outward forms can make us clean,

“ The leprosy lies deep within.”

* Job. viii. 14. † Isa. xiv. 23. ‡ Prov. xxx. 12.

§ Luke xviii. 9. || Mat. xxiii. 23. ¶ Verse 27.

Tho' you wash you with nitre, and take much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God . Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast † . By the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified ‡ . We are not saved by working, but by believing. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent § . Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die eternally || . Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. It follows, then, as an unavoidable consequence, that cursed are the dead which die out of the Lord. Ye self-righteous souls, beware of trusting in a form of godliness, or becoming only *almost* christians. If you are only *almost* christians, you can be only *almost* saved, you must be altogether damned. He that believeth not, shall be damned ¶ . I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation ** . Perhaps it may be the last warning I may ever give you. Perhaps, these lips of mine may never more address you. I would proclaim then, as with my last breath, to the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the pharisee and prophane, that unless death find you*

* Jer. ii. 22.

† Eph. ii. 9.

‡ Gal. ii. 16.

§ John vi. 29.

|| John xi. 26.

¶ Mark xvi. 16.

** Heb. xiii. 23.

*in the Lord, you must die accursed. And as death leaves you, so will judgment find you. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest * . When that great and terrible day of the Lord shall come, that the sea shall give up the dead which are in it; and death and bell deliver up the dead which are in them †; and all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ‡: And when the Judge of all shall separate the precious from the vile, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats § . Then must you be placed on the left hand, and hear that dreadful, that distracting sentence passed upon you, every word of which will be more sensibly felt than a thousand daggers in the heart; Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels || . These shall go away into everlasting punishment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ¶ . There shall not be one plea made in arrest of judgment. Every conscience shall then bear witness, that the Judge of all the earth does right **, and the mouths of damned sinners shall be for*

* Eccles. ix. 10.

§ Matt. xxv. 32.

** Gen. xviii. 25.

† Rev. xx. 13.

|| Veric 41.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 10.

¶ Mark ix. 48.

ever stopped. *The wicked shall be silent in darkness**.

I shall conclude the whole with a word to you who are *in the Lord*. *All hail! highly favoured! Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places†*. Go on and prosper, and the Lord be with you. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you, that you should be called the sons of God‡*. *Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake§*. *Though in the world you meet with tribulation, be of good cheer, Christ has overcome the world||*. *Though here you meet with difficulties, and sorrows, remember, all things work together for good to them who love God¶*. *Fear not, therefore, for no weapon formed against you shall prosper***. *Fear thou not, saith the blessed Jesus, by the mouth of the evangelic prophet, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen*

* 1 Sam. ii. 9. † Deut. xxxiii. 29. ‡ 1 John iii. 1.
§ 1 John ii. 12. || John xvi. 33. ¶ Rom. viii. 28.
** Isa. liv. 17.

thee;

thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord†. All things are your's, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's‡. What unspeakable blessings are these, which are given in time! but these are only the first fruits of a more plentiful and glorious harvest. When you come to die, then you take possession of the promised Canaan: then you truly begin to live. I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, &c. Call to mind the dying words of our departed sister. She would have been glad to have told you all of the Lord's goodness to her soul. But could we now hear her voice, in what more noble and exalted strains would she speak of the ever adorable Jesus. It frequently strengthens the weak hands, and comforts the mourners in Zion, to see, or hear of a

* Isa. xli. 10. † Isa. xlix. xv. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

soul thus going triumphant to glory. May it have this blessed effect upon you, my believing brethren, and then the design, in bringing these things before you, will be answered. Lean upon that staff, which has supported all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, which are gone before, and then fear not to enter the dark valley of the shadow of death. As I before observed, Jesus says, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee* *. None shall pluck them out of my hand †. The Lord will own you in the great day, before men, angels, and devils; and say to you, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* ‡. *These shall go away into life eternal* § : *these shall be ever with the Lord* ||. Here I must drop the subject; for we must die to fully know, or be able to describe, the blessedness of the saints in another world. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* ¶. The time is at hand; the happy moment is near, when we shall

* Heb. xiii. 5. † John x. 28. ‡ Matt. xxv. 34. § Ver. 46.

|| 1 Thes. iv. 17. ¶ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

*see him as he is**, without an interposing veil : *Then shall our sun go no more down, and the days of our mourning be ended† . He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus ‡ .*

* 1 John iii. 2. † Isa. lx. 20. ‡ Rev. xxii. 20.

On the Death of a Believer.

I.

HOSANNA to Jesus on high !
 Another has enter'd his rest,
 Another's escap'd to the sky,
 And lodg'd in Immanuel's breast ;
 The soul of our sister is gone
 To heighten the triumph above,
 Exalted to Jesus's throne,
 Exalted by Jesus's love !

II.

How happy the angels that fall * ,
 Transported at Jesus's name !
 The saints whom he soonest shall call
 To share in the feast † of the Lamb !

No

* Rev. v. 14.

† Rev. xix. 9.

No longer imprison'd in clay,
 Who next from his dungeon shall fly?
 Who first shall be summon'd away?
 My merciful God— Is it I?

III.

O Jesus! if this be thy will,
 That suddenly I should depart,
 Thy counsel of mercy reveal,
 And whisper the call to my heart :
 O give me a signal to know,
 If soon thou wouldst have me remove,
 And leave the dull body below,
 And fly to the regions of love.



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